

# One Survivor, One Single Survivor!

Treblinka Transitees

[Germar Rudolf](#)

## Abstract

Orthodox Holocaust scholars reject the revisionist claim that the so-called Aktion Reinhardt Camps were transit camps for Jewish deportees on their way to the East. They challenge revisionists to show them one Jew, one single Jew, who was deported through any of those camps and survived. This paper presents evidence of thousands of Jews for whom those camps were mere layover stations.

## Holocaust Archaeology

If we follow the orthodox Holocaust narrative, the so-called Aktion Reinhardt Camps – Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka – were pure extermination camps. In the very lethal sense of the word, they are said to have been dead ends for Jewish deportees sent there, who were allegedly murdered in homicidal gas chambers using engine-exhaust gas, and their corpses subsequently buried and later exhumed and cremated on huge outdoor pyres.[\[1\]](#)

During the past 20 years, archeological explorations were conducted by orthodox researchers at all three Aktion Reinhardt Camps in search of remnants of the claimed gas-chamber buildings and of the mass graves and mass-cremation sites claimed to have existed nearby.

The earliest such explorations were conducted between 1997 and 1999 at the site of the former Bełżec Camp.[\[2\]](#) While major amounts of disturbed soil were located, the amount of human remains discovered was minimal, and no trace of any building was found that resembles even remotely what witnesses have described as the homicidal gas chamber.[\[3\]](#)

Next in line was the Sobibór Camp, which was the focus of much larger explorations than those conducted at Bełżec. The investigations started in 2000 and extended well into the year 2014 and probably even beyond that. Unlike Bełżec, the researchers involved did not merely undertake core sample drillings, but they actually excavated several areas suspected to contain remnants of former camp structures: fence poles, buildings, mass graves and cremation pits.[\[4\]](#) In the summer of 2014, a structure was discovered which the researchers involved believe to have been the claimed homicidal gas chamber.[\[5\]](#) Until late 2016, the website dedicated to the Sobibór memorial had a 2014 news item posted announcing the impending publication of the research result.[\[6\]](#) When I approached them via email in late November 2016 asking whether that publication had yet appeared, and if so, where it could be found, instead of receiving an answer, the announcement was quietly removed. A revisionist critique of the findings at Sobibór was published in 2013, which of course does not address the claimed gas-chamber find.[\[7\]](#)

The Treblinka Camp was last in line to become the object of modern archeological research. This included the use of high-technology devices such as LIDAR scans and ground-penetrating radar. Core samples and minor excavations were also conducted, although apparently on a much smaller scale than at Sobibór. No dedicated research report, paper or book seems to have been published as a result of it, but the lead researcher, Dr. Caroline Sturdy Colls, did include some of her findings in a general book on

the forensics and archeology of mass-murder sites.<sup>[8]</sup> A written revisionist critique published two years prior to the appearance of that book could analyze only small bits of information that had been published in rather superficial media items, hence is of merely limited value.<sup>[9]</sup> A revisionist video documentary addressing Sturdy Colls's research limits itself to what had appeared during a 2013 TV documentary,<sup>[10]</sup> hence has a narrow focus as well.<sup>[11]</sup>

### **Conflicting Claims**

In any murder case, the burden of proof is on those claiming that a murder has happened. In any scientific dispute, the burden of proof lies on those making any claim about anything.

In the present case, everybody agrees that at least some 1.3 million people were deported to the Aktion Reinhardt Camps, a claim primarily based on a German radio message intercepted and deciphered by the British on January 11, 1943, which speaks of a total of 1,274,166 deportees.<sup>[12]</sup> But what happened to the Jews who arrived at those camps?

Orthodox historiography maintains that almost all of these Jews were murdered on the spot, usually within a few hours of their arrival at the latest. Only a few healthy young men were kept alive as slave laborers to run the camp's genocidal operation, but even those usually did not live long.

Revisionists, on the other hand, claim that these camps were transit camps, and that Jews arriving at these borderline stations merely swapped trains from European standard gauge to the Russian wide gauge, to be deported further East during a grand plan of resettling Europe's Jews.<sup>[13]</sup> The revisionist storyline has it that most of the Jews deported to those camps were kept there for only a short while – hours or days – during which they and their belongings may have been subjected to hygienic measures: showers and disinfestation. They also may have been subjected to some kind of selection to extract those individuals suitable for slave-labor deployment, to be sent elsewhere, while the rest boarded another train headed further east to be resettled in some part of the then-German-occupied parts of the Soviet Union.

### **Proving Mass Murder**

Those claiming that a gigantic mass-murder operation unfolded at these places have to deliver the kinds of evidence required in any murder case: primarily traces of the bodies, evidence of murder, and any kind of trace of the murder weapon. The archaeological investigations mentioned earlier were carried out to some degree to do exactly that: locate bodily remains, determine the way they died, and find traces of the gas chambers. Revisionist critics have claimed that the evidence actually found falls extremely short of what has to be expected, yet orthodox counter-critics have argued otherwise.<sup>[14]</sup>

For this study, I will focus on the Treblinka Camp, which is said to have had the largest death toll of all three Aktion Reinhardt Camps.

First, let's define what kind of evidence would be required to prove that the claimed mass murder has taken place. Most-important, this concerns traces of the victims or of the manner in which their bodies were disposed of. The orthodoxy claims that some 700,000 victims were buried within the camp and later exhumed and cremated on huge pyres. I will leave aside here the question as to how such a task could have been physically possible, for if the remains of 700,000 victims can be located, that feat

obviously was possible somehow. Hence, we need to worry about the How only if we do *not* find the expected traces.

The burial of 700,000 victims within a few months – most are said to have died between July and October 1942 – requires a minimum amount of space in the soil. In addition, large areas where the cremations allegedly took place must have existed, too. Finally, the cremation remains – ashes, body fragments, unburned wood – need to be found somewhere. This all needs quantification.

However, the task is not as simple as it seems, because we are not dealing with a pristine crime scene as it was left behind by the alleged perpetrators. Quite to the contrary: it is a matter of record that two forensic/archaeological investigations were conducted there at war's end or shortly thereafter, one by Soviet, the other by Polish authorities.<sup>[15]</sup> In addition, there is evidence suggesting that bombs were dropped onto the area of the former Treblinka Camp toward the end of the war, probably by Soviet aircraft, causing major devastation.<sup>[16]</sup> Furthermore, completely undocumented random digs by grave robbers have been going on for decades, as the site was left basically unguarded for decades after the war.

Hence, even if one were to succeed in determining exactly how much of the camp's underlying soil has been disturbed, how is one to tell which of these perturbations originate from the purported perpetrators and which have been added by the above-mentioned activities that unfolded after the camp had been dissolved? While it is perhaps possible to find out where and how much of a volume the Soviet and Polish investigative commissions dug up, and to what degree it included the volume of former mass graves and cremation sites, etc., it is probably rather difficult, if at all possible, to distinguish bomb craters and haphazard digs from original mass graves and cremation sites. But such a distinction is indispensable in order to be sure which soil perturbation is original and which is later. Admittedly, this prerequisite is a very high standard of proof which may be extremely difficult or even impossible to meet. But that failure of securing the evidence while it was fresh is merely the fault of the authorities in charge of the area right after the withdrawal of all German authorities in 1944. Worse still, if the camp's area was indeed bombarded by the Soviet Air Force, this raises the suspicion that the Soviets themselves were those who initiated the process of destroying the evidence. It is moot to speculate about their motives, but it is safe to say that securing evidence in a mass-murder case was obviously not on their minds. At any rate, not having conducted a thorough forensic investigation for so many decades has led to a considerable deterioration and spoliation of the evidence which we may never be able to overcome.

Still, considering that the cremation of 700,000+ victims must have left innumerable traces in and around the camp, it should be possible to come to some conclusions when scouring the soil of the entire former camp and its vicinity for these remains.<sup>[17]</sup> This might be a daunting task, but it seems to be the only way of determining with any degree of reliability the magnitude of events that unfolded there.

As to remnants of homicidal gas chambers, this seems to be a wild-goose chase undertaken by the orthodoxy. While it is expected that some building remains have to be found in those camps, finding a "gas chamber" seems illusory, for how are we to decide whether the ruins of a building served as a chemical mass-slaughter facility? While it is possible to expect chemical traces of mass murder committed with hydrogen cyanide aka Zyklon B – in the form of long-term-stable Iron Blue<sup>[18]</sup> – the lethal gas which orthodox historians today claim was allegedly used in the Aktion Reinhardt Camps – engine-exhaust gases – would not have left any trace whatsoever. Hence, if some ruins containing tiles

are discovered, as was the case at Treblinka, how are we to decide whether these tiles were part of an actual shower room, as revisionists claim, or of a homicidal gas chamber merely disguised as a shower room, as orthodox historians insist? As far as I can see, there is no way of telling the difference.

### **Proving Transit Activities**

Revisionists face a different challenge. If almost 1.3 million individuals were transited through those camps, where is the evidence for this? Where are these 1.3 million persons? Asking that question 75 years later is a little late, too. It cannot be expected that many of these individuals are still alive today. But what evidence is there that Treblinka, to stick with this camp, served as a layover station? And is there even one single Jew who was deported to Treblinka and showed up alive in “the East” or anywhere else, for that matter?

Interestingly, there are quite a few eyewitness accounts recorded by orthodox organizations who attest to the fact that they, together with hundreds of other deportees, were indeed transited through Treblinka. Eric Hunt has included some of these statements in his documentary on Treblinka.<sup>[19]</sup> Although these Jews were sent to the Majdanek labor camp rather than “to the East,” their stories still confirm that Treblinka did serve as a transit camp for thousands of Jews. This means that Treblinka had to have the logistical capability of serving that purpose.

Carlo Mattogno has pointed out a particularly illuminating case of a Jewish individual transited through Treblinka.<sup>[20]</sup> It concerns the fate of a certain Minna Grossova, who was born on Sept. 20, 1874. On October 19, 1942, this 68-year-old lady was deported to Treblinka – at a time when on average some 5,000 Jews are said to have been killed and buried there every single day. But instead of getting killed there, she was sent to Auschwitz, where she ... no, was not sent to the gas chambers either, although she was most certainly not “fit for labor,” but lived there another 14 months, finally dying there on December 30.<sup>[21]</sup> If Mrs. Grossova at age 68 was spared death in the gas chambers of Treblinka and Auschwitz, it is likely that the many hundreds of her fellow sufferers deported together with her shared her fate as well. This fate, too, underlines that Treblinka was indeed used as a transit camp where not even old, frail Jews were murdered.

How about Jews actually transited to “the East”? Jean-Marie Boisdefeu has documented an interesting case he stumbled over while skimming Vad Vashem’s database of Holocaust victims.<sup>[22]</sup> This case, too, is based on a memorial book published by government authorities, in this case of Germany. It concerns the Berlin Jew Siegmund Rothstein, born in 1867, who was first deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto for elderly Jews in August 1942. Barely a month later, however, on September 26, he was deported to Treblinka at the age of 75. But that was not his end at all, because the German authorities found life signs of him further east, as they finally determined that Rothstein died in Minsk, the capital city of Belarus, some 240 miles (286 km) east of Treblinka. I doubt 75-year-old Mr. Rothstein jumped off the train prior to arriving at Treblinka and ran all the way to German-occupied Minsk. Hence, he must have traveled there by train. I also doubt that the German authorities reserved a train just for him or put just him on a military train going to Minsk. Rather, he must have made that journey on a deportation train together with hundreds or thousands of fellow deportees from Theresienstadt.

Boisdefeu states that none of the thousands of Jews deported from Theresienstadt is listed in the German memorial book as having been killed at Treblinka, but that they all are listed with a variety of different locations where they either died or were last heard of and then went missing.

This case, too, indicates that thousands of Jews seem to have been deported to “the East” with Treblinka as a transit station. As a result, Treblinka must indeed have had the logistics to temporarily house, feed and clean hundreds, if not thousands of individuals for short periods of time. Among other things, it most likely did have a very real shower facility for that very purpose.

It is therefore clear that orthodox historians have to adjust their narrative to accommodate that role somehow. For instance, Treblinka could be re-labeled as a combined extermination and transit camp, serving both purposes at once. This dual-interpretation approach, first observed by Arthur Butz in his trail-blazing book,<sup>[23]</sup> has been very successful in shoring up the orthodox extermination narrative for Auschwitz and Majdanek, when the mounting evidence against their cases threatened to undermine them. In the case of Treblinka, orthodox as well as revisionist historians could be accommodated by saying that, yes, there was a real shower, but, yes, it was also equipped to murder instead of shower the deportees. Whether that is a credible narrative, is for the reader to decide.

As far as I know, no one has done any thorough, systematic research trying to locate more individual cases of Jews transited through Treblinka, Sobibór or Bełżec to other places using the data available in published sources, victim and witness databases, etc. No one has even considered the question, let alone pursued it. Orthodox researchers are unlikely to undertake such research, as asking the question is a heresy worth the professional death penalty. Revisionists, on the other hand, have so far lacked the human, monetary, logistical and temporal resources to undertake such research on the grand scale it would require. So in this case as well, the evidence keeps deteriorating, as memories fade, documents decay and survivors die.

The one revisionist whom I had invited to do that research in late 2016 – Eric Hunt – got upset with me because I didn’t offer him the research results on a silver platter ready for his consumption. Hence, he decided to take an altogether contrary stance with regard to the whole matter. Pity.

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## Notes

- [1] Described most authoritatively by Yitzhak Arad in his book *Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington/Indianapolis 1987.
- [2] Andrzej Kola, *Bełżec: The Nazi Camp for Jews in the Light of Archeological Sources. Excavations 1997-1999*, The Council for the Protection of Memory and Martyrdom/United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Warsaw/Washington 2000.
- [3] See Carlo Mattogno, *Bełżec: Propaganda, Testimonies, Archeological Research and History*, reprint, Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2016 (1st ed.2004).
- [4] Andrzej Kola, “Sprawozdanie z archeologicznych badań na terenie byłego obozu zagłady Żydów w Sobibórze w 2000 r,” *Przeszłość i Pamięć*, No. 3, 2000; *idem*, “Badania archeologiczne terenu byłego obozu zagłady Żydów w Sobibórze,” *Przeszłość i Pamięć*, No. 4, 2001; Isaac Gilead, Yoram Haimi, Wojciech Mazurek. “Excavating Nazi Extermination Centres,” *Present Pasts*, Vol. 1, 2009; Marek Bem, Wojciech

Mazurek, *Sobibór: Archaeological Research Conducted on the Site of the Former German Extermination Centre in Sobibór 2000-2011*, The Foundation for Polish-German Reconciliation, Warsaw/Włodawa 2012.

- [5] Claus Hecking, "Archäologen im NS-Lager Sobibór: Plötzlich kommen Stimmen von Juden aus den Ruinen'", *Der Spiegel*, Sept. 23, 2014; [www.spiegel.de/einestages/ns-vernichtungslager-Sobibór-ruinen-der-todesfabrik-entdeckt-multimediaspezial-a-993045.html](http://www.spiegel.de/einestages/ns-vernichtungslager-Sobibór-ruinen-der-todesfabrik-entdeckt-multimediaspezial-a-993045.html)
- [6] [http://Sobibór.info.pl/?page\\_id=1524](http://Sobibór.info.pl/?page_id=1524)
- [7] Carlo Mattogno, Thomas Kues and Jürgen Graf in their 2-volume work *The "Extermination Camps" of "Aktion Reinhardt"*, 2nd ed., Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2015 (1st ed. The Barnes Review, Washington, D.C., 2013), Chapter 8.2.3f., pp. 886-939.
- [8] Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Holocaust Archaeologies: Approaches and Future Directions*, Springer, Berlin 2015.
- [9] Carlo Mattogno *et al.*, *op. cit.* (Note 7), Chapter 8.2.5., pp. 939-952.
- [10] *Treblinka: Inside Hitler's Secret Death Camp*, BBC/Furieux & Edgar Productions, 2013; <https://vimeo.com/120776242>.
- [11] Eric Hunt, *The Treblinka Archeology Hoax*, DVD, Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2014; <https://youtu.be/YuAAjrbbBiM>
- [12] Peter Witte, Stephen Tyas, "A New Document on the Deportation and Murder of Jews during 'Einsatz Reinhardt'," in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Winter 2001, pp. 469f.
- [13] Most recently and thoroughly explained by Carlo Mattogno *et al.*, *op. cit.* (Note 7); see esp. Chapter 7, "Where They Went: The Reality of Resettlement," pp. 561-703.
- [14] See in this regard primarily Jonathan Harrison, Roberto Muehlenkamp, Jason Myers, Sergey Romanov, Nicholas Terry, *Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka: Holocaust Denial and Operation Reinhard, A Critique of the Falsehoods of Mattogno, Graf and Kues*, <http://holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com>, December 2011.
- [15] See Carlo Mattogno, Jürgen Graf, *Treblinka: Extermination Camp or Transit Camp?*, 2nd ed., Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, Ill., 2005, pp. 77-90.
- [16] Bomb craters of up to 6 meters deep and 25 meters in diameter were reported by the Polish investigative commission in late 1945; see *ibid.*, pp. 85-87.

- [17] Although even that evidence might have been corrupted by Jewish visitors scattering the ashes of their deceased relatives on the camp grounds; see Eric Hunt, *op. cit.*, Note 11.
- [18] See Germar Rudolf, *The Chemistry of Auschwitz*, Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2017.
- [19] Eric Hunt, *op. cit.*, Note 11, starting at 6 min 18 sec.
- [20] C. Mattogno, *Healthcare in Auschwitz: Medical Care and Special Treatment of Registered Inmates*, Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2016, p. 165.
- [21] Miroslav Kárný, *Terezínská pamětní kniha*, Terezínská Iniciativa Melantrich, Prague 1995, Vol. 1, p. 393.
- [22] François Sauvenière (pseud.), “Gazé à Treblinka et mort à Minsk,” *Dubitando*, No. 7, March 2006; republished in: Jean-Marie Boisdefeu, *Dubitando: Textes révisionnistes (2004-2008)*, La Sfinge, Rome 2009, pp. 133-136; Engl.: Jean-Marie Boisdefeu, “Gazé à Treblinka et mort à Minsk,” *Inconvenient History*, Vol. 9, No. 1; <http://inconvenienthistory.com/9/1/4223/>
- [23] Arthur Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century: The Case against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry*, 4th ed., Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2015, pp. 12, 141, 149, 156, 160, 165, 179f. etc.

<b>Author(s)</b> :	<a href="#">Germar Rudolf</a>
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